2:Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1945 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Hurricane fighter and a mobile canteen for blitzed areas in England. The women of Mukalla have made bandages for the Red Cross in Egypt regularly since 1942.

That is a brief comparison between the Qu'aiti State in 1936 and in 1944: and progress has been made in other ways too. In case the picture seems too favourable, it should be remembered that the famine, due to the loss of over £600,000 a year in remittances from Singapore and Java, seven years' drought, the difficulty of getting food and its high price, the loss of 50 per cent of the working camels, and the difficulties of shipping, has had a very grave effect on the country, but has on the whole hit the interior rather than the coast. His Majesty's Government came to the rescue by voting over £300,000 for famine relief, and by providing air transport for grain, but in dealing with the progress of the Qu'aiti State it is right to record that the Government and the merchants have done their best, and the 1944 estimates included about three lakhs of rupees for famine relief, both by direct grants and by the provision of public works. A voluntary cess by merchants on their imports, the contribution by Government servants of 1 per cent of their salaries, and other charitable efforts raised a fair amount more; and soup kitchens, infirmaries and so on were provided at the coast for refugees from the interior.

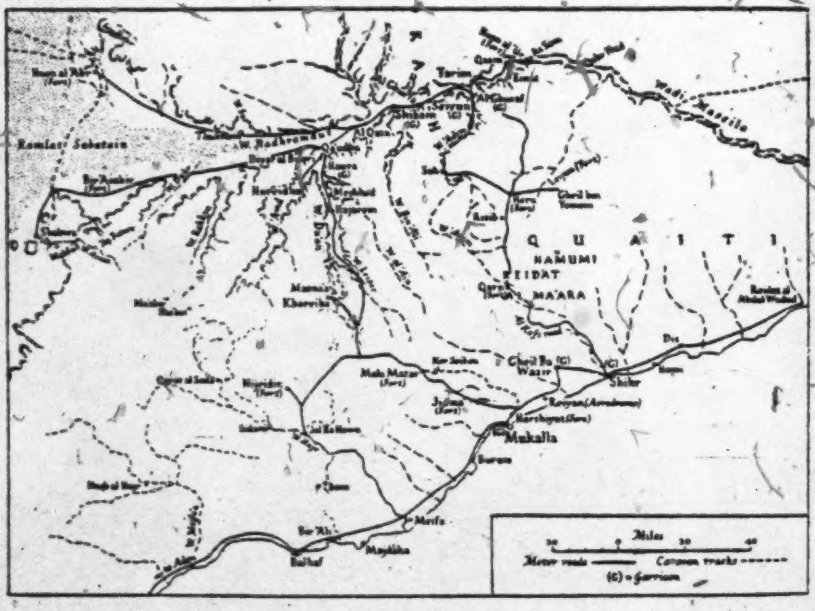
Nature of the People and Country

Before describing the methods used in building up the Qu'aiti administration, something must be said about the nature of the people and their country to explain why unusual methods were required. The Hadhramaut is in many ways different from the rest of Arabia, from which it is for the most part separated by desert on all sides, but since it has a seaboard its people have always been able to find a living across the sea. They have had to do this because most of the 70,000 odd square miles of the country is irreclaimable desert and it is unlikely that it could ever support more than a quarter of the population. In other lands they have come to know Western rule but for the most part it has had few attractions for them. They generally find the trammels of an ordered life irksome, and throw them aside as happily as they drop their tarbushes and tussore suits for a waist cloth and indigo when they come back.

The nature of the country provides an explanation of the nature of the people. The vast and barren areas of mountain and jol have bred in the bedouin a deep sense of freedom and an unwillingness to yield it to anyone, for it is all he possesses. In the deep valleys of the hinterland the horizon is bounded by walls a thousand feet high and this has bred in the people an exclusiveness which it would be hard to find elsewhere. In the towns and villages of these valleys a most particular form of religion has grown up. There is none of the free brotherhood of Islam, but a system of classes of seiyids, of settled tribesmen with few of the virtues of the desert bedouin, of money-lending immigrant Yafa'i tribesmen from the west, of descendants of African slaves, of merchant townsmen, and of hard working

2:Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1945 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

serfs whose economic condition is so oppressive that they have almost fallen to the level of the beasts whose labours they share on their wells. The seiyids dominate the life and thought of the country and, though some of them, those with whom the Westerner comes into contact, have furnished their houses with most of the comforts, many of the luxuries and still more of the barbarities of the West, Western influence ceases at that point and they have been described as "members of the most fanatical sect in Arabia." There are over 20,000 of them in the country and with their families they probably represent about a fifth of the population. The Hadhramaut is also a particular and holy land for it contains the tomb of the prophet Hud and a whole host of minor prophets and saints.



Reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society

The country contains the most extraordinary contrasts. Civilization ranges from extremes of luxury and comfort to utter squalor, from considerable culture to complete savagery. The poor town classes usually have enough to eat but no margin, the bedouins live on the verge of starvation. You find the highest standard of morality among the bedouin, but in the towns and especially on the coast vice is all too common: theft, however, is surprisingly rare. Formal religious observance among the settled people is widespread but there are few "good" men. Those there are stand out like beacons. Among the bedouin there is less formal observance (some tribes scarcely pray or fast) but a higher standard of honour